

And we expect this torch to be given to whoever will be the successor.

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, how are you going to explain what's going on back home to Mr. Putin and other foreign leaders?

President Clinton. Well, I think it's pretty clear that no one knows yet who won the election. There are recounts in progress, and there will be a full accounting according to an accepted legal process in America. We have plenty of time. There's nothing to worry about.

I think other leaders should have the same reaction the American people have about it. I think they are pretty relaxed about it now. They're going to let the process play out. Both sides are certainly very well represented, and they'll argue their points, and we'll see how it works.

NOTE: The exchange began at 1:10 p.m. at the Assara Guest House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on Ratification of the Convention To Combat Desertification

November 15, 2000

On November 13 I signed the instrument of ratification for the Convention To Combat Desertification. Degradation of dry lands affects hundreds of millions of people around the world, especially in Africa. The Convention will help countries marshal the resources needed to mitigate the effects of desertification. It will enhance the effectiveness of foreign assistance and promote a strong role for nongovernmental organizations. Finally, it properly places affected local communities at the heart of international efforts to meet this critical challenge. I look forward to working with our partners in Africa and around the world to implement this innovative international agreement. I commend the Senate for its approval of this important treaty.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea in Bandar Seri Begawan

November 15, 2000

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Have any of the leaders asked you about the election results, sir?

President Clinton. Just briefly.

Q. Did they accept your explanation of what's going on?

President Clinton. No, they were just interested in it. I told them it would all be worked out. The process was underway.

Possible Visit to North Korea

Q. Mr. President, what exactly are you waiting for from the North Koreans, in terms of commitments on their missile program? What do you need to hear from them?

President Clinton. Well, we're working on a number of issues, of which the missile program is one. We're obviously trying to make as much progress as we can, and I'll make an appropriate decision about the trip sometime in the not too distant future.

Q. Sir, do you think it would be helpful to bring the South Koreans' President with you if you make a trip?

President Clinton. Well, I don't—he just went, and he deserves a lot of credit for doing it. I was actually quite thrilled, as I've told him several times, that the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to him for a lifetime of devotion to peace and human rights, and especially for the breakthrough he's achieved here.

So I think he's put this whole business on a different footing. Secretary Albright, as you know, had a very good trip to North Korea. So I think we're going to work together. We've always worked in partnership with South Korea, and we will continue to do so.

NOTE: The exchange began at 6:42 p.m. at the Istana Edinburgh Guest House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.